

Rental Housing Licensing Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

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General Information

Where is the Rental Housing Inspection and Licensing Office?

The office is in Planning and Development Services Center, 1739 Broadway, 3rd floor. The center's hours are 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. and 1 to 5 p.m., Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday and 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. and 1 to 5 p.m. on Tuesday. The office is closed on holidays.

Why is a rental license required?

City housing code requires that any residential dwelling unit property have a current rental license in order to maintain consistent health and safety standards for all rental properties in Boulder.

Are there circumstances when a rental license is not required?

Rental licenses are not required under any one of the following circumstances.

A dwelling unit occupied by the owner (or members of the owner's family) who rents to no more than two roomers unrelated to the owner or the owner's family.

OR

A dwelling unit that meets all the following conditions:

- The dwelling unit is the owner's principal residence
- The dwelling unit is temporarily rented for no longer than 12 consecutive months in any 24-month period
- The dwelling unit was occupied by the owner immediately prior to its rental
- The owner is temporarily living outside of Boulder County
- The owner intends to reoccupy the dwelling unit upon termination of the temporary rental period

OR

A commercial hotel and motel that offers lodging accommodations primarily for periods of time less than 30 days. However, bed and breakfast facilities are not excluded from rental license requirements.

OR

Common areas and elements of buildings containing attached, but individually owned, dwelling units.

How much is the rental license fee?

The fee is \$45 per property to cover administrative costs of issuing the rental license, regardless of number of units.

What happens if I rent a unit without a rental license to someone?

Per Boulder Revised Code 1981 Section 10-3-17, legal action may be taken with a fine of \$2,000 per violation and/or up to 90 days in jail.

Who do I call to find out if a property has a rental license?

Call the Rental Housing Inspection and Licensing Office at 303-441-3152 or go to the Property Inquiry page and look up a specific address.

How long is a rental license valid?

Term of rental license: After the baseline and safety inspections are completed and the license issued, only the safety inspection, application and fee must be submitted every four years to maintain the rental license. When ownership of the property changes a new rental license including both inspections are required.

Are rental licenses transferable to new owners?

No. Once a property changes ownership, a new application is required.

If rented, are accessory dwelling units (ADU's) and owner's accessory units (OAUs) required to be licensed?

An accessory dwelling unit is a separate and complete single housekeeping unit located within an owner's primary dwelling unit. An owner's accessory unit is a separate and complete single housekeeping unit that may be located either within or separate from the owner's primary dwelling unit. Rental licenses are required and in addition to inspection for licensing, city staff may inspect the ADU/OAU for other approval criteria.

Does an owner need a property agent?

Not if the owner resides in Boulder County. Property owners who do not reside in Boulder County, however, are required to have a local agent. The local agent is designated by the owner and provides a contact person for the property.

Can my tenant be the local agent?

Yes, however it is advisable to consider that tenants frequently change.
How do I make changes to my address, phone or agent information?

Fill out this change of address/agent form and send it in with your changes.
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Inspections

For technical questions about the rental housing inspections, please call 303-441-4189.

What inspections do I need to get licensed?

Two inspections are required: baseline and safety inspections.

Both a Baseline inspection and a Safety inspection are required to:

- License a new rental property;
- renew a license when the previous license has expired;
- or renew a license when ownership has changed during the four year licensing period.

A Safety inspection ONLY is required to:

- Renew a license which has not expired AND the property has not had a change of ownership during the four year licensing period.

What do the inspections include and who does them?

Inspections are done by private inspection companies. Re-inspections may be required if there are items to be repaired. If the property is in compliance, the inspector will inform you at the inspection site and will provide you with a signed inspection compliance verification form.

- [View a list of licensed inspectors \(24.19 KB\)](#)

Charges for the inspection depend on the policies of the licensed rental housing inspector with whom you have contracted. Prices vary. We encourage you to compare prices between companies.

Baseline Inspection

The Baseline inspection consists of two parts:

A. General Inspection-

includes inspections of the exterior, egress, stairways, fire protection and gas appliances, food preparation and storage, lighting and ventilation, general conditions, and plumbing.

B. Electrical Inspection-

Both parts of the Baseline inspection must be completed by licensed rental inspectors. Companies may be licensed to perform one or both parts of this inspection. Inspectors must have:

General Inspection: D-9 Licensed Contractor's license issued by the city of Boulder

Electrical Inspection: Electricians license OR housing inspector certification from a nationally recognized program (i.e. ASHI, NAHI) OR a ICC/ICBO Combination Inspectors certification

Safety Inspection

The safety inspection consists of three parts:

- Fuel burning appliance inspection and tune-up

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Inspection required if either the space heating system or water heater is fuel burning (not electric)

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Verification of inspection for condominiums required for any individual dwelling unit system OR common space heating/water heating appliances. More information is available on the city of Boulder rental housing license Web site (see above)

Must be completed by a qualified heating maintenance person.

Inspector licenses:

A. Fuel burning appliance inspection and tune-up

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City of Boulder A, B, or C mechanical license, OR

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State of Colorado licensed engineer, OR

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Qualified Xcel service personnel

A list of Inspectors licensed to do part A of the Safety inspection is NOT available. Call any mechanical or heating contractor and inquire if they hold any of the licenses referenced above and are qualified to inspect and tune up fuel burning appliances for the rental housing licensing program.

B. Smoke detectors:

This consists of testing the smoke alarms and can be completed by the owner or property manager for the property.

C. Trash Service:

This section can be completed by the owner or property manager for the property.

What if I can't get an inspection completed in time?

If you are unable to have the baseline or safety inspection completed by the date on your rental license new/renewal form, please call the Rental Housing Inspection and Licensing Office at 303-441-3152 to request a time extension for completion of these items.

My inspections are a few months old can I still use them?

Yes, inspections are considered current if they were done within the last 12 months.

Who do I talk to when I have a question on a repair requirement?

A contractor licensed in the city of Boulder can assist you in determining the cost and extent of the repair work.

I own a condo with a central heating system. Do I still need inspections?

Condominium buildings with solid fuel or gas fuel-fired heating plants, whether used for space heating, water heating, or a combination of both, must have the heating system inspected by a qualified heating maintenance person per city of Boulder codes. This includes any fuel-fired appliances that may be used in common by more than two rented units.

While most boiler systems are inspected by state inspectors annually, a qualified heating maintenance person is still required to make inspection of those portions of the safety inspection checklist that the state boiler inspector does not include and to verify that annual inspections are current.

There are several ways this can be accomplished. The home owners association (HOA) or manager of condominium units having a common heating plant (fuel-fired heating plant serves more than two separate units) can have the heating system inspection performed once a year by a qualified heating maintenance person (inspector). The inspector fills out and signs one safety inspection verification form per building or system. The signed form would be kept on file in the condominium managers office (DO NOT send the forms directly to the rental housing licensing office) and can then be made available upon request to property owners who need a rental license. We require the entire rental licensing packet of forms (application, fee, and signed inspection verification forms) be submitted together.

Alternately, owners or property managers of rented condominium units having a common heating plant can work with the on-site maintenance personnel or complex manager to determine who is currently servicing the heating system. Multiple owners can pool their resources and have the heating inspection performed by one qualified heating maintenance person that can sign the safety inspection verification form for each separate unit.

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Enforcement

Is enforcement action taken against unlicensed rental properties?

Yes. Code enforcement action is taken when complaints or code violations, such as trash, noise, weeds and over-

occupancy, result in an investigation and the property is being rented without a current rental license. Additionally, the city is initiating investigations of unlicensed units that may not come to our immediate attention due to other code enforcement activity. Enforcement action involving an unlicensed rental unit is not pursued if owners demonstrate that they are making timely and reasonable efforts in cooperation with the city to license their property.

All rental properties in Boulder are required to maintain a rental license. Obtaining a rental license is the responsibility of the property owner. The maximum fine for failure to license rental property is \$2,000 per violation and up to 90 days in jail.
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Changes to the Rental Housing Program

The city no longer performs the rental housing inspections, and property owners are required to contract with private housing inspection companies.

Why was this program changed?

During 1999, city staff surveyed the community about the rental license program. Results indicated that while there was general support for continuing the program, it could be improved. With that in mind, staff considered and evaluated methods that might be more responsive to the community. To address these concerns and as part of the 2000 budget process, City Council approved changes to the program and outsourced the inspections. Additional changes to the program made in 2002 include providing a baseline inspection using a written checklist. After this initial baseline inspection, a safety inspection is performed every four years. The sale of the property triggers the next baseline inspection. These inspections are conducted by private inspectors.

How are fees for the private housing inspection companies determined?

The city is not a party to the contract so is not involved in setting the fee. It is up to the property owner to hire the inspector and negotiate a price for the service.

What are the requirements to become licensed as a city of Boulder rental housing inspector?

Complete a city contractor license application. A \$15 administration fee is required for licensing of inspectors.

"What was the 2003 Amnesty for Rental properties?"

"In an effort to license all rental properties, the city of Boulder declared and amnesty for unlicensed rental properties in 2003. Additional information is available at:

<http://www.bouldercolorado.gov/comm/pressrelease/2003/0715.html>
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